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PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S STATEMENT ON SOVIET MILITARY SHIPMENTS TO CUBA

DECLASSIFIED

Press Conference
September 4, 1962

"All Americans as well as all of our friends in this hemisphere have been concerned over the recent moves of the Soviet Union to bolster the military power of the Castro regime in Cuba.

"Information has reached this Government in the last four days from a variety of sources which established without doubt that the Soviets have provided the Cuban Government with a number of anti-aircraft defensive missiles with a slant range of twenty-five miles which are similar to early models of our Nike.

"Along with these missiles the Soviets are apparently providing the extensive radar and other electronic equipment which is required for their operation.

"We can also confirm the presence of several Soviet-made motor torpedo boats carrying ship-to-ship guided missiles having a range of fifteen miles.

"The number of Soviet military technicians now known to be in Cuba or enroute -- approximately 3,500 -- is consistent with assistance in setting up and learning to use this equipment.

"As I stated last week we shall continue to make information available as fast as it is obtained and properly verified.

"There is no evidence of any organized combat force in Cuba from any Soviet bloc country; of military bases provided to Russia; of a violation of the 1934 treaty relating to Guantanamo; of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction and guidance.

"Were it to be otherwise the gravest issues would arise. The Cuban question must be considered as a part of the world-wide challenge posed by Communist threats to the peace. It must be dealt with as a part of that larger issues as well as in the context of the special relationships which have long characterized the inter-American system.

"It continues to be the policy of the United States that the Castro regime will not be allowed to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force. It will be prevented by whatever means may be necessary from taking action against any part of the Western Hemisphere.

"The United States in conjunction with other Hemisphere countries will make sure that, while increased Cuban armaments will be a heavy burden to the unhappy people of Cuba, themselves, they will be nothing more."

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A4000/MBR

REVIEWED BY *[Signature]*

DATE *10/1/68*

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Department of State

September 5, 1962

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DRAFT FOLLOWS

All Americans, as well as all of our friends in this Hemisphere, have been concerned over the recent moves of the Soviet Union to bolster the military power of the Castro regime in Cuba. What was suspected but not confirmed a week ago has now become clear: the Soviets have provided the Cuban Government with a number of anti-aircraft defense missiles. Similar to our own Nike anti-aircraft missiles, these weapons require for their installation and operation extensive radar and other electronic equipment and large numbers of trained military personnel and technicians. The shipments of Soviet personnel and equipment now known to be in or enroute to Cuba are consistent with this specific development; and there is as yet no information to indicate the presence of organized combat forces in Cuba from any Soviet bloc country.

We intend, however, to maintain and increase our surveillance of all such shipments -- and the American people and the Inter-American system will be kept fully informed. The United States will not permit the Castro regime to export its aggressive purposes by force of any kind; and the Secretaries of State and Defense are working with other members of the Organization of American States to intensify our common effort to thwart every attempt of the Castro regime to promote subversion and violence in this Hemisphere, or transport its tools and weapons. Any armaments provided to Cuba, whatever their quantity, nature or source, will not be permitted to threaten the peace and freedom of any American state; and this Nation will take whatever means may be necessary to make certain that pledge is fulfilled.

DRAFT FOLLOWS

*Last draft
Cuba*

Sept. 4, 1962

All Americans, as well as all of our friends in this Hemisphere, have been concerned over the recent move of the Soviet Union to bolster the military power of the Castro regime in Cuba. Information has reached this government in the last four days from a variety of sources which establishes without doubt that the Soviets have provided the Cuban government with a number of antiaircraft defense missiles similar to early models of our Nike. Along with these missiles the Soviets are apparently providing the extensive radar and other electronic equipment which is required for their operation. The number of Soviet military personnel now known to be in Cuba or enroute -- approximately 3500 -- is consistent with assistance in setting up and learning to use this equipment. As further information is obtained and confirmed we shall continue to make it public promptly.

9/4/62

There is no evidence of any organized combat force in Cuba from any Soviet bloc country; of military bases provided to Russia; of a violation of the 1934 treaty relating to Guantanamo; of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction and guidance. Were it to be otherwise, the gravest questions would arise.

The Cuban question must be considered as a part of the world-wide challenge posed by Communist threats to the peace. It must be dealt with as a part of that larger issue, as well as in the context of the special relationships which have long characterized the Inter-American system.

It continues to be the policy of the United States that the Castro regime will not be allowed to export its aggressive purposes in any way. It will be prevented, by whatever means may be necessary, from taking action against any part of the Western Hemisphere. The United States, in conjunction with other Hemisphere countries, will make sure that while increased Cuban armaments will be a heavy burden to the unhappy people of Cuba themselves, they will be nothing more.